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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 006440

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/25/2015

TAGS: EAID PREL MOPS IZ

SUBJECT: TURKS REACH OUT TO IRAQIS ON HUMANITARIAN AID FOR TALAFAR

REF: A. ANKARA 6100

1B. BAGHDAD 4219

1C. ANKARA 5452

Classified By: A/DCM James R. Moore for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: The Turkish MFA has revised its humanitarian aid (HA) offer for Talafar in order to generate a positive Iraqi response and to mend fences with the Iraqi Red Crescent. Senior MFA officials raised the HA issue Oct. 26 with both Charge and ECONCouns. We responded that Turkey must approach the Iraqis; our role is only to provide logistical and security support once the two governments agree on modalities. MFA called us later to inform us that the ITG's representative for Talafar aid and reconstruction, Haydar Abadi, has told the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad that he welcomed the Turkish offer, and that the Turkish Red Crescent has formally proposed an aid package to the Iraqi Red Crescent. We hope we can proceed on this basis. End summary.

12. (C) MFA Deputy Director General for Multilateral Affairs Tunc Ugdul called in ECONCouns Oct. 26 to discuss Turkey's offer of humanitarian assistance (HA) to Iraq (reflets). Ugdul reported that responsibility for this issue had now passed to his office (from the Economic Directorate), and that a senior-level Ministry meeting the previous day had decided the following:

--Turkey wishes to provide HA only for Talafar, not for Kirkuk. Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) is the provider.

--Turkey proposes to send a total of 540 tons of food and 84 tons of soap and cleaning products which would require a total of about 30 trucks. This would be done in two shipments: one before the end of Ramadan, and one a bit later.

--Of the shipments, Turkey will provide one-third directly to the Iraqi Red Crescent Society (IRCS) at any site the IRCS may choose.

--TRC will then take the remaining two-thirds directly to Talafar, where it will deliver the aid to the IRCS for the IRCS to distribute (i.e., without regard to religion, ethnicity, or other factors not related to humanitarian need).

--Turkey seeks the USG's assistance in approaching the IRCS to seek their assent to the Turkish offer. Ugdul explained that there had been "misunderstandings" between the TRC and IRCS over the last Turkish HA shipment to Talafar in September (ref c). Ugdul said that the IRCS had accused the TRC of seeking to provide aid only for Turkmen; he added that Turkey has provided aid in the past to Iraqis of all communities and had no desire to single out the Turkmen. He asserted that Turkey wants to create "an atmosphere of understanding" between the Red Crescents, and hoped Turkey's modified plan for its HA shipment would help establish this. He reiterated how important it would be for the U.S. to intervene with the IRCS.

13. (C) Deploying ref b, ECONCouns pushed back, noting that it is not an appropriate role for the USG to broker between the TRC and the IRCS or between the GOT and ITG. We want to be supportive of Turkey's relationship with Iraq, but to act as a go-between would undermine the sovereign ITG. We added, however, that the revised Turkish plan -- to have the IRCS deliver the aid -- was a new element.

14. (C) Shortly after our meeting, Ugdul called to report that:

--TRC had last week proposed its plan (as outlined above) for providing HA to the IRCS, but the Iraqis had not yet responded. Ugdul advised TRC to repeat its proposal today.

--The Turkish Embassy in Baghdad had met Oct. 25 with Haydar Abadi -- ITG representative in charge of HA and reconstruction in Talafar -- and reported that Abadi welcomed the Turkish offer "of the new assistance prior to the end of Ramadan."

--Consistent with the increasingly pragmatic approach the GOT has taken over the past year to building relationships in Iraq, Ugdul said the MFA would like to foster an improved, cooperative working relationship between the two neighboring Red Crescents, for the long term.

15. (C) MFA Deputy Undersecretary Nabi Sensoy also raised the Talafar aid issue during an Oct. 26 meeting with the Charge on another topic. Charge emphasized that Turkey must make its offer to the Iraqis: We are prepared to assist with logistics and security only after the sovereign ITG accepts a Turkish aid offer.

16. (C) COMMENT: It seems that the aid issue has been a hot potato within the Turkish MFA, unfortunately causing paralysis when action was most needed. Nineteen days have passed from the first the Turks told us of their offer and we responded that they should talk to the Iraqis, yet the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad did nothing until Oct. 25 and -- so we were told by MFA -- didn't even receive instructions until Oct. 21.

17. (C) COMMENT, CONT.: Most importantly, however, we believe the Turks have made progress. In addition to de-emphasizing the political nature of the planned aid, the ITG, via Abadi has accepted the offer. Per ref b, we would like to work with Embassy Baghdad and Task Force Freedom to organize logistical and security arrangements for the smooth delivery of this assistance. END COMMENT.

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